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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #31
March 5, 1976

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM NO. 1885, SUPP. 11 EXTENDS FORMS AND REPORTS REDUCTION CAMPAIGN UNTIL APRIL 30, 1976.....Current extension provides additional time for employees not yet finished reviewing their paperwork. Special task force now completing preliminary reports. As of January 31, 1976 agencies had eliminated 5,782 forms and 441 reports, and had improved 219 forms and 117 reports for estimated savings or cost avoidance of approximately \$10.9 million. Average success rate for reports and forms eliminated is running about 17-18% of original inventory with AMS, ASCS, APHIS, OA, ADS, EMSC, ERS, OEO, ES and FmHA eliminating 25% or more forms or reports. However, some agencies have reported limited success - though their administrators have given assurance that the mandated reductions will be achieved. Results will be published on an on-going basis. Agencies are reminded that to avoid duplicate reporting, any form or report dropped as a result of a Special Task Force should be reported by the agency responsible for it. (Contact: C.R. Hanna, OMF, ext. 76111)

THE SECRETARY'S CONTROLLED CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM SYSTEM CHANGED TO PERMIT AGENCIES TO EXTEND DEADLINE ON CORRESPONDENCE WHICH CANNOT--FOR VALID REASONS--BE ANSWERED ON TIME.....A meeting will be held on Friday, March 5, with Correspondence Control Officers and legislative liaison officials to discuss this and other changes. (Contact: Jerry Pepper, OO, 78393)

USDA TO TEST NEW FACTOR EVALUATION SYSTEM (FES).....New way of classifying GS-1 through GS-15 nonsupervisory positions. Key element is use of 9 factors specified in all position descriptions and described in standards known as "benchmarks." Point values will be assigned to factors to facilitate classifying individual positions. Standard drafts for mail and file clerk, clerk-stenographer and reporter, secretary, clerk-typist and transcriber and accounting technician will be issued in April for nationwide trial application. Results will be reviewed by CSC and benchmarks and the system adjusted as needed. Implementation of FES scheduled to start about December 1976 and to continue over next 5 years. CSC has emphasized that FES will not have classification grade impact (upward and downward) on any present positions that are correctly classified. (Contact: Frank Marx, OP, ext. 76104)

AS RESULT OF ADS REQUEST FOR AGENCY ANALYSIS, SEVERAL AGENCIES PLAN TO RELEASE OR PURCHASE ADP EQUIPMENT THEY HAVE BEEN RENTING FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS.....Others still analyzing problem. Follow-up letters transmitted to agencies with unclear or incomplete initial response. Pending publication in 11 AR, a separate letter has been sent to each Management Council member stating the Departmental policy regarding annual reviews of leased equipment. (Contact: H. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

MID-YEAR USDA SECTION 8(a) AWARDS REACH 43% OF FY1976 GOAL.....Table below shows section 8(a) awards made by USDA agencies through December 31, 1975. Agencies needing assistance in meeting their goals for remainder of FY 1976 should contact OEO, Rural Minority Business Assistance Division. (Contact: J. Fred King, OEO, ext. 77117)

| <u>Agency</u> | <u>FY1976 Goal</u> | <u>Mid-Year Achievement</u> | <u>% of Goal</u> |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| AMS | \$ 780,000 | \$ 167,898 | 21.5 |
| APHIS | 120,000 | 199,257 | 166.0 |
| ARS | 495,000 | 251,257 | 50.8 |
| ASCS | 10,000 | 146,582 | 1,465.8 |
| EMSC | a/ | 0 | 0 |
| FmHA | 40,000 | 0 | 0 |
| FNS | 380,000 | 0 | 0 |
| FS | 1,500,000 | 883,418 | 58.9 |
| OO | 50,000 | 0 | 0 |
| SCS | 750,000 | 124,000 | 16.5 |
| TOTALS | \$4,125,000 | \$1,772,412 | 43.0 |

a/ No goal established

PRESIDENT FORD APPROVED J.P. BOLDUC NOMINATION AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 29, 1976.

PARKING SITUATION IN COURT 4 IS EXPECTED TO IMPROVE.....As approved by Management Council, OO has contracted for a parking attendant. The contract, effective February 27, provides for a uniformed attendant to be on duty each day to monitor parking in the Court and insure a smooth flow of traffic to and from the loading docks. (Contact: Al Cauley, OO, ext. 72815)

METRO AND MALL CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULED TARGET DATES.....The parking lot at the east end of the Administration Building will be restored by the end of May. Metro structural work and restoration of Independence and 12th Street will be completed by July 1. Finish work at the station entrances will take a few months longer. Redevelopment of the Mall will be completed approximately July 1. Adams and Washington Drives, and cross streets, will be closed and replaced with walkways. Jefferson Drive, originally scheduled to be closed to vehicle traffic, will remain open for at least two more years. (Contact: Bill Roth, OO, ext. 75225)

SUMMARY REPORT OF RECOGNITIONS AND AGREEMENTS IN USDA BY UNION.....

| Union | Recognitions | Employees in Exclusive Units | | | | Agreements | Employees Under Agreement |
|--------|--------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|------------|---------------------------|
| | | Number | Wage | Prof. | Other GS | | Number |
| AFGE | 55 | 12,968 | 1,507 | 445 | 11,016 | 39 | 12,130 |
| FPQINA | 1 | 292 | | 292 | | 1 | 292 |
| NAGE | 1 | 105 | 20 | | 85 | 1 | 105 |
| NFFE | 99 | 12,438 | 2,242 | 1,530 | 8,666 | 71 | 11,137 |
| Total | 156 | 25,803 | 3,769 | 2,267 | 19,767 | 112 | 23,664 |

(Contact: A. Seeger, OP, Ext. 76955)

DID YOU KNOW THAT FmHA:

- ... provided \$5.8 billion of credit for agriculture, community facilities, housing, and business and industrial development in 1975. This dollar volume for one year exceeded the 1974 total by \$1.2 billion.
- ... financed nearly 110,000 INDIVIDUAL HOMES and 2,650 multi-family RENTAL HOUSING projects, many designed especially for senior citizens.
- ... introduced the use of HUD's Section 8 funds to provide rent for low-income families in rural apartments built with FmHA loans.
- ... FARM LOANS exceeded \$2 billion for the first time in the agency's 40-year history.
- ... made loans to 57,000 family-size farmers for OWNERSHIP, OPERATING, and other purposes in 1975.
- ... made more than 40,000 EMERGENCY LOANS to restore farm operations disrupted by natural disasters in 1975.
- ... guaranteed 2,749 EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK CREDIT ACT LOANS made by commercial lenders, totaling \$324 million in 1975.
- ... made loans totaling \$448 million and grants of \$129.4 million to build some 1,400 WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS in rural areas.
- ... approved nearly 500 loans totaling \$227 million for other types of COMMUNITY FACILITY projects in 1975, including hospitals, medical centers, nursing homes, fire stations and equipment, emergency rescue equipment, recreation centers, community buildings, and others.
- ... guaranteed \$393.5 million of BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT LOANS made by private lenders in 1975. The agency also provided an additional \$13 million grants to improve industrial sites.
- ... Business and Industrial loans created or preserved nearly 21,800 jobs in rural areas in 1975.
- ... extended its services into the Western Pacific by opening an office in Guam to administer rural housing loans. FmHA programs are administered through 42 state offices and 1,750 county offices serving the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.
- ... continued a program of management improvement, including the introduction of electronic systems and simplification of procedures to increase the capacity of field personnel in processing and servicing loans.
- ... has made 7.4 million loans and grants totaling \$33 billion during its 40-year history.
- ... had to write-off as uncollectable only 1.3 percent of advances in all programs in 1975.
- ... sold \$4.5 billion of CERTIFICATES OF BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP to the Federal Financing Bank. These investment instruments are backed by blocks of farm and home mortgages and other notes insured by FmHA.

HONORABLE SECRETARY BUTZ AND HONORABLE FRANCINE NEFF, TREASURER OF THE U.S., WILL KICK OFF THE USDA SAVING BOND CAMPAIGN MARCH 10 AT 10:00 A.M. IN JEFFERSON AUDITORIUM.....Campaign will be conducted during month of April.

Asst. Secy. Bolduc addressed workshop of agency and staff office Chairpersons on February 25 and announced that MBO techniques will be applied in Campaign. Last year, USDA ranked 15th among Federal agencies with 75% rate of participation. This year, USDA goals are 80% participation and 25% increase in current allotments. (Contact: G. Bickerton, APHIS, ext. 68051)

IN RECENT TESTIMONY ON THE HILL.....

- ... Rural housing was subject of oversight hearings held by Senate Subcommittee on Housing and Urban Affairs. Deputy Assistant Secretary James Bostic and FmHA Administrator Frank Elliott reviewed historical trends in rural housing and the decline in below-standard housing in oversight hearings that concluded February 18.
- ... House Agriculture Committee backed Assistant Secretary Robert Long in hearings held February 17-18 on the proposed National Agricultural Research Policy Act of 1976 (H.R. 11743). Assistant Secretary Long's testimony opposed major portions of the bill, declaring the National Agricultural Research Policy Committee and grant programs which it proposed duplicates existing programs at a substantial increase in Federal expenditures. The Bill has considerable support from universities and is sponsored by 37 members of the 42-member committee.

PRESIDENT FORD APPROVED SECRETARY BUTZ'S NOMINATION OF J.P. BOLDUC AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 29, 1976.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FEBRUARY 27 MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING.....

- ... In response to Congressional limitation on Department's Working Capital Fund (WCF), Council members signed (or obtained their Agency Administrator's signature) reimbursable agreements with NFC for future FY 1976 services provided. Centralized services - payroll, personnel, billing and collection, accounting support, etc. - and estimated costs remain unchanged from WCF operations. Billing will be based on services actually provided.
- ... Council recommended implementation of proposed Secretary's Memorandum No. 1662, Supplement 7 - Civil Rights Considerations of Policy Actions. Will require civil rights impact analysis for specified policy and operating actions including (1) regulations or policies published in Federal Register, (2) projects for which Environmental Impact Statements are required, (3) Agency decisions affecting program delivery to public that are not published in Federal Register and (4) relocation of field offices or laboratories employing 10 or more employees. Council plans to evaluate working effectiveness and related cost of implementation after six months operation.
- ... Council voted general approval of recommendations of Project Overhead Task Force on Training. Requested rewording of training definition to clarify that training must apply to current or future official employee duties. Additional written comments, if any, to be submitted to OP by March 5.
- ... ADS discussed Department's ADP and related telecommunications spending alternatives for FY 1976-1977. (See February 27, 1976 ADP Financial Plans - All memorandum for details.) Reminded Council members that financial information and impact on agency program statements DUE IN ADS ON MARCH 12, 1976.
- ... J.P. Bolduc requested WRITTEN feedback from Council members about desired agenda and date for next Management Council Conference.